SECOND

OR

A Sermon preached at the

Mrs. Anne Mitchelthwait, the

[illegible] March 26

By JOS. HAMMET, Master of Arts, and Minister

of Oxfburne.

[illegible]

SECOND TIME

TO THE

Right Worſhipfull, and my Honoured friends, *John Mickle-thwait* Eſq; *Joſeph Mickle-thwait* Gent. the Lady *Anna Dickinſon*, and Mrs. *Dorothy Stillington*, the ſurviving Iſſue of the Worſhipful Mrs. *Anne Mickle-thwait*, late deceaſed.

IT hath ever been the cuſtom (partly to give, partly to gain reſpect) to commit nothing to the Preſs, but under the inſcription of ſome perſons name, to whom their work might be acceptable, and by whom it might be rendred more acceptable unto others: Now whilſt I thought on the Dedication of the enſuing Sermon, my thoughts never ſtrayed farther, than one of you; to whom, I concluded, that all men; for the argument of it (ſet aſide other reſpects) would adjudge it due, but to which of you, I had none to direct me, and therefore followed mine own fancy, which was this, not to diſ-joyn you, who were ſo nearly joyned in the ſame common relation, and have already approved your ſelves to be the genuine children of the ſame mother: It is not my purpoſe to commend you, but to commend your mother to you, the fruits of your religious education, do (to the credit of your family and the obſervation of the world.) in a great meaſure ſhew themſelves: but let me tell you, you lye under a greater engagement than ordinary: many eyes are upon you, that expect you ſhould bring forth fruit anſwerable to the ſtock that bare you: though you be vertuous, yet you will not be thought worthy of commendation, except you excell. Paul tells us how he might boaſt, that he was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, 3 Phil. 5, that is, an Hebrew both by the father and the mothers ſide; this it ſeems was eſteemed a great priviledge among the Jews: it was deemed a privilege to be a Proſelite, a greater privilege to be an Hebrew, but the greateſt priviledge to be an Hebrew of the Hebrew: ſo may every one of you boaſt, that you are a Chriſtian of the Chriſtians, deſcended on both ſides from believing and religious parents, ſuch as did ſo profeſſe themſelves to be, and were accounted really ſo by all that knew them: this is your priviledge, it will be your praiſe, if your practiſe ariſe to the height of it. The Romans forced the lewd ſon of Scipio Africanus to pluck off from his finger a ſignet-ring, whereon the face of his father was engraven, accounting him unworthy to wear his picture, that would not reſemble his vertue: and if you ſhould degenerate, you will be thought unworthy the name of your parents. This I tell you, not ſo much becauſe I fear you, but becauſe I would not be thought to flatter you: as you have Val. Max. lib. 5. cap. 5.

more; that the name of Mistris Thwaite may be greater, and [illegible] and fresh perfume in the Churches of Christ to succeeding [illegible]. To this end it is, that I present this Sermon to you, desiring that you would accept of it, and take in good part my freeness with you.

Now for the Sermon it self, I expect to meet with Censures of sorts of persons. They that knew her better than I, will think I said too little: and they that knew her not so well, will think I said too much. In answer to the former, I confesse I have so. When a Painter is about to paint a man, he first draweth some [illegible] and this is called ἰχνογραφία: then he addeth the black colours, called σκιαγραφία: lastly the vive colours, and this is called [illegible]. now I acknowledge, that toward the resemblance of your mother, I have only given some rude draughts, the most that I have done is the adding of black colours: the perfecting of the work, which consists in super-adding the vive and lively colours, I leave to a more skilful hand and learned pen, who will lay his foundation lower than I have done, and therefore raise his superstructure higher. For those that think I have said too much, I will only say as the Fathers of old to them that doubted of the Trinity, Go with John to Jordan and there thou shalt see: so go but to York and there you shall be assured; repair to those that were her intimate acquaintance, enquire of them concerning the truth of what I have said, and you will say, as the queen of Sheba concerning Solomon, it is a true report that you have heard of me, yea the half was not told you, 1 Kin. 10. 6, 7.

Comitare Johannem ad Jordanem & videbis.

I have but one thing more to adde I acknowledge, that I have here and there made additions and alterations in the Sermon from what I preach'd: and though I had never so much time exactly to pen any thing, yet I should always judge it necessary before it come to publick view, lambere fœtum, to look and lick it over again, which when I have done, it will be still unpolished, and my best homily nought akin to Chrysostome. Yet if some persons, reputed able enough to judge had not thought it fit to be printed and were earnest to have it so, it had been buried within the same walls where is your mothers grave.

Now the Lord make you to abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgement, that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousnesse, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God: thus prayeth

Octob. 13. 1659. Your Worships [illegible] and all

DORCAS
REVIVED
The Second Time.

9 Act. 36, 37.

Now there was at Joppa *a certain Disciple named* Tabitha, *which by Interpretation is called* Dorcas: *This Woman was full of good works and Almes-Deeds which She did. And it came to passe in those days, that She was Sick and Dyed.*

WEE are now met to celebrate the Funerals of a most grave and Religious Matron, to whose worth (while She [illegible]) Flattery it self could add nothing; and [illegible] whose worth (being now Dead) Malice [illegible] Envy it self cannot detract any thing. Set aside the Name of the Person mentioned in the Text, and the place of her Habitation, and what the Holy Ghost affirms of *Dorcas*, may be as confidently averred of her: She was a Disciple, full of good Works and Almes-deeds which she did: and it is come to passe in these days, that She hath been *Sick* and is now *Dead*.

The words contain in them the description of a good Woman of the Primitive times, a Woman that excell'd most of our Women now, as much as those times for Purity and Integrity excel ours, those times were more Pure and Savouring of Chri-

stian simplicity than ours, though not so pleasant and delicate, and so it is likely were their Women. Concerning her in the Text, you may observe 1st. her Sex, a VVoman: 2d. her Name, *Tabitha* or *Dorcas*: 3d. the Place of her Residence, *Joppa*: 4th. her Profession, a Disciple: 5th. her Practice, full of good VVorks and Almes-deeds which she did: Lastly, her Sickness and Death; *And it came to passe in those days, that she was Sick and Dyed.* Something of each of these.

1. Her Sex, a Woman. That is observed to be true of Women, which is spoken of *Jeremiahs* Figs, those that were good, were very good; those that were evil, very evil, 24 *Jer.* 3. So those Women which we read of in Scripture, that were wicked, were very wicked, as *Jezebel* and *Athaliah*: but those that were good, very good, as *Mary*, *Anna*, *Elizabeth*, and *Dorcas*: & whatever may be *Salomons* meaning, 7 *Eccl.* 28. Yet it is easie to observe, that the New Testament affords good store of good Women; therefore when *Soloman* saith, that he had not found one Woman amongst a thousand, perhaps he meaneth, not one good VVoman amongst his thousand VVives and Concubines that he had. 1 *Kin.* 11. 3. Or else his meaning is, that in respect of the discovery of Hearts and Natures, whether in good or evil, it is harder to find out throughly the perfect disposition of a VVoman than of a Man: Take his words in the most rigorous manner, and all that can be with soundnesse gathered from them is, that good VVomen are rarer than good Men; grant it, yet when they are good, they are (as we say) rarely, that is, very good, and do equal, if not exceed men. How famous is *Anna* for her Devotion? *Elizabeth* for her blameless Conversation? the *Canaanitish* VVoman for her Faith? *Lydia* for her diligent attendance unto the VVord? *Dorcas* for her Cha[illegible] *Lois* and *Eunice* for their pious education of *Timothy*? The Elect Lady and her Children for walking in the Truth? And though *Eve* eat that Fruit, which occasioned the fall of Man-kind, yet *Mary* bare and brought forth that Fruit, which hath raised and restored Man to a greater happinesse than he lost, and therefore all Generations call her blessed. I care not for making Comparisons between Men and Women, seeing they are both one in respect of Nature; and differ only in Sex; Let those that please themselves in playing upon Women, remember that when God created Man, he made them Male and Female, and both after his own Image. I will only say this, that if God send Man to School to Learn of such

2 Kin. 21. 25. 2 Chron. 22. 10.
2 Luke 37. 1 Luke 6. 15 Mat. 28. 16 Act. 14 15. 9 Act. 39. 2 Tim. 1. 5. 2 Epist. Joh. 4.
1 Luk. 48.
2 Gen. 27.

such a despicable Creature as the Pismire 6 *Prov.* 6. Let him not think it any disparagement to learn sometimes of a Woman, especially such an eminent and vertuous Woman as *Dorcas*: *Paul*, the great Preacher of the Gentiles, disdaineth not to acknowledge *Priscilla* one of his helpers in Christ Jesus, 16 *Rom.* 3. And there are writings of Learned Men *extant de illustribus Fœminis*, as well as *de illustribus Viris*. I will shut up this with one word of exhortation to women; for should I not exhort women to be as good as they have been, I might be thought to flatter them; I would have you know therefore, that whilst I commend women that have been good, my purpose is not to flatter those that are not good, or at least not so good, as the Holy women in old time who trusted in God, and adorned themselves, not with plaiting of hair, wearing of Gold, & putting on of Apparel so much as with the adorning of the hidden man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 1 *Pet.* 3. 3, 4, 5. I would have women therefore for their encouragement to take notice, that they have as fair Copies of their own to write after, as notable Patterns of their own Sex to imitate, as men have; Study therefore to be as Modest, Meek, Humble, Obedient, Chast, Temperate, Devout, and Charitable, as the Holy women of old time; that you may deserve such an Honourable Testimony, as the Holy Ghost giveth unto *Dorcas*. VVhether *Dorcas* was Maid, VVife, or VVidow, is to us uncertain, nor is it much material to enquire; Labour yee to be full of good works, as she was; and it shall be your Honour, and an Honour to your Sex, be your Estate what it will. So much of the first particular.

2. The second follows, and that is her Name; *Tabitha*, which by interpretation is called *Dorcas*. *Dorcas* now stands in need of interpretation, as *Tabitha* did then. *Tabitha* is a Syriack word, *Dorcas* a Greek word, they both signifie in English, a Roe or Goat. Many Parents (I suppose) have given their Children, since, this name for *Dorcas* sake; but why *Dorcas* Parents should choose to call her so, may seem strange to us, who are ignorant of the reason. However let us not be offended at the name, when we can find no fault with the Person: with God there is no respect of persons, much lesse of names; but if it were before *verbum Sæculi*, it is now become *verbum Ecclesiæ*. *Jacob* signifies a supplanter or deceiver, yet God disdaineth not

to call himself the God of *Jacob*. The Person if good, dignifies the Name be it never so mean; and the Name, though never so good, cannot dignifie the Person, if he be evil and unworthy. *Abel* was a good man, yet his name signifies vanity. *Lydia* was a vertuous woman, yet her name signifies a standing Pool. *Absalom* was a traiterous and troublesome Son, yet his name signifies a Father of Peace; and *Michol* the Daughter of *Saul* was none of the best women, yet her name signifies one who is perfect. To be sure, it can be no disparagement to *Dorcas* to be so called, seeing the Church compareth Christ to that thing, which her name imports, *sçil*, a Roe, 2 *Cant.* 9. And the Roe is commended to us in Scripture for a loving, pleasant Creature 5 *Prov.* 19. Thus much we may take notice of, that the Lord knoweth every one that belongs to him by name, which he reckons unto *Moses* as a special favour 33 *Ex.* 17. And when the famous names of the wicked shall rot, the obscurest names of his own people shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

10 *Prov.* 7. 112. *Psal.* 6.

The place of her Residence, *Joppa*. *Joppa* was a Town situated by the Sea side (Port-Towns have been observed to be great inlets to the Gospel) it was part of the inheritance of the Tribe of *Dan*, formerly known by the name of *Japho*, 19 *Josh.* 46. 2 *Chro.* 2. 16. now it is called by the Inhabitants *Sappho*. We find no mention made of *Joppa*, but in this and the next Chapter, throughout the whole New Testament; and it is very probable, had not *Peter* Sojourned there, and *Dorcas* Lived and Dyed there, that we had not heard of it at all. Now so long as *Dorcas* is had in memory, *Joppa* will not be altogether forgotten. *Of* Zion *it shall be said* (in way of honour) *this and that man was Born there*, 87 Psal. 5. Good Persons are an honour to the places that they live in, and together with their own names transmit the memorial of their Habitations to posterity. *Bethlehem* was but little among the thousands of *Judah*, 5 *Mich.* 2. yet it is become famous, because it was the place of Christs birth, 2 *Mat.* 6. We read how Cities, yea whole Countries have contended for the birth and breeding of famous men. Religious persons are not only a blessing to the places of their abode, whilst they live; but a credit also, after they are dead. As you know, that little Spring amongst us is become famous, because of that great River of *Ouse* flowing from it, which is so advantagious to the Country round about: So many places, though in o-

ther

other respects obscure and ignoble, and might have continued so without observation or remembrance, have become famous, and their memories perpetuated in succeeding generations, by the birth or residence of some honourable person. Let us learn from hence to live so, that we may not be a discredit to the places we live in; There are three things that are the glory of a Country, Arts, Sciences, and Religion; If we desire to honour the places of our Nativity or abode, we must neither be Idle, Ignorant, nor Prophane; if we be, the Earth that we tread on bears us, but we are a burden to it; the Air we breath in, enlivens us, but we are an infection to it.

Her profession, a Disciple. Disciple was the usual appellation by which those that professed the truth, were called at the first plantation of the Gospel; at its first original, it was appropriated to those who were the special Attendants of our Saviour, so the twelve Apostles are called the twelve Disciples, 10 *Math.* 1. Afterwards as the Church increased, so the name grew more common; so that in Christs time they that were frequently his Auditors, are called his Disciples, 6 *Joh.* 66 and those which afterward were first called Christians at *Antioch*, 11 *Act.* 26. were before that time called Disciples; now this title is given to *Dorcas* 1. *ad Honorem*, 2. *ad Documentum*. 1. *ad Honorem* for Honours sake. To be a Christian, a Disciple, a Professour of the Gospel, is a great honour to any Person, to be such an one, not in a large sense as the name of Christian and Professour is now used (for it would make a mans heart even abhor and loath to see what kind of Professours and Christians we have in our days) but to be such an one in that strict acceptation, that *Dorcas* is entituled here, is a Persons great honour: Certainly, if holinesse be the greatest Honour, and piety the best Nobility, then they are to be reputed the most Noble and Honourable Persons, who are Professours of Holiness, wicked men themselves canot gainsay it, when they see that the Profession of holiness is accompanied with the Practice of Piety. How often do we meet with that of *David* in the *Psalmes*? Lord I am thy Servant, and no doubt but he thought it a greater honour to be the Servant of God than the King of *Israel*. There are three callings in Honour styled Professions, and they are the calling of the Lawyer, the Physician, and the Divine; all other callings are accounted less noble, Liberal and Ingenuous: but there is a calling and Profession for Nobility beyond all these, and that

is the calling and profession of Christianity. How have the greatest Princes and Personages on the Earth Gloried in titles of this nature? as the King of *Spain* in being called the Catholick Prince; the King of *France* in being styled the most Christian King; and our Kings of *England* have thought themselves more famous for the title of Defenders of the Faith. Sure it is, that as there is nothing more honourable than Christ and the Gospel, so there is no Profession more honourable than the Profession of the Gospel and Christianity; when they that professe the Gospel have but a care to honour it by walking, as becometh the Gospel: and what though there be some Professours, who are vile Persons, the profession, though less honoured, is no less honourable. The Ministry is a most honourable calling, though there be many unworthy Ministers. As soon may we think to scour the spots out of the Moon, as purge the Church of all unworthy Members. Let the shame be cast, where the blame is, there is no shame in being a Christian, or in professing to be so, but it is a shame to profess the Gospel and practice quite contrary to it: indeed the profession of the Gospel is so honourable, that Loose-Livers, Prophane Persons, and Hypocrites (if we knew them) are not worthy the name of Professours.

1 *Phil.* 27.

If then to be Professours be our honour, let us glory in it; and if our profession of the Gospel shall make us vile in the eyes of wicked men, let us resolve with *David* in another case, I will make yet a greater profession, I will be more vile. They who received the mark of the Lamb, had it in their foreheads a visible place, to note, that they should not be ashamed of it. *I will speak of thy testimonies before Kings* (saith *David*) *and will not be ashamed.* 119 Psal. 46. We live in an age, wherein *Nazianzens* complaint of old may be renewed, nothing is so delightfull as the deriding of a Christian; applause and preferment waits upon them that can ἀνδρας ὑβρίζειν rail upon honest men in handsome language. *Michol* was barren untill her death, for scoffing at *David* dancing before the Ark; but I know not how (saith a learned man) *Michol* is become fruitful, after her death, of a scoffing generation. What then? shall any that makes profession of the glorious name of Christ be afraid of words? then may Prophane Persons scoffe indeed: let us rather despise the shame; yea we may glory in this shame; the Apostles rejoyced, that they were accounted worthy to

2 *Sam.* 6. 21 22.

2 *Tim.* 1 οὐδὲν οὖν τερπνὸν ὡς παρρησιάζεσθαι καυχᾶσθαι. 9 *Rev.* 4.

2 S. *m.* 6. 23.

12 *Heb.* 2

suffer

suffer shame for his name, 5 *Act.* 41. Oh that ever men, who desire to be called Christians, should yet be ashamed to make profession of Christianity, that they should judge that their shame, which is their greatest glory. Let us remember what our Saviour saith 8 *Mark* 38. Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinfull generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he commeth in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels. For such of us as have begun to make a more than common profession of the Gospel, let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and unto good works, not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as we see the day approaching, whether of judgement or of persecution, as it is, 10 *Hebr.* 23, 24, 25.

Dorcas is called a Disciple here, *ad Documentum*, as for her honour, so for our instruction. μαθήτης a Disciple, is as much as a Schollar or Learner, and the Christians in the primitive times were so called, because they were brought up at the Apostles feet, and for the acquiring of saving knowledge had their dependance upon the ordinary means of instruction, the preaching or teaching of the word. So then *Dorcas* a Disciple, that is, as one observes, a Schollar in the School of Christ, and submitter of her self to the Ordinance of God for the saving of her Soul; now if Christian and Disciple be æquivalent and convertible terms, then it is easy to make the observation; That he who is indeed a Christian, is a Learner, one that depends upon, and submits himself to the means of instruction. To this end were the Scriptures written, namely for our learning 15 *Rom.* 4. and when Christ sent out his Disciples, he bade them go μαθητεύσατε teach, that is, make Disciples, 28 *Math.* 19. when Christ would shew, what mark his sheep have, He declares it to be an ear-mark, 10 *Joh.* 27. *my sheep hear my voice*; and therefore are Ministers of the Gospel called Teachers, 30 *Isa.* 20. 4 *Eph.* 11. to note, that they who hear them should be Learners. Nor ought any of Christs Disciples to think it a disparagement to be Learners; for if they look at the Person of whom they learn, they are Christs Ministers, 1 *Cor* 4. 1, Christs Ambassadours, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. they represent no meaner a person than the Lord of Life and Glory, the great Prophet of the Church

and Saviour of the World: and how meanly soever they may be accounted of by men, yet they are called the glory of Christ, 2 *Cor.* 8. 23. If they look at the things which they learn, they are of an excellent nature, and it will ennoble, elevate and help much to the perfection of their understandings: for we speak the wisdome of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the World unto our Glory, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. We Preach such things, as the very Angels desire to look into, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. We Preach Christ Crucifyed, 1 *Cor.* 1. 23. the knowledge of whom is so excellent, that *Paul* counted all things but losse to gain it. 3 *Phil.* 8. And as we preach concerning things of the greatest excellency, so likewise of the greatest advantage, for unto us is committed the Word of Reconciliation. 2 *Cor.* 5. 18. So that we are appointed to teach the lost Children of *Adam* the way to *Paradice* again; how they may, not only make their Peace with God, but be restored to his favour, friendship, and familiarity, so that they shall be admitted to eat of the Tree of Life, and live for evermore. Is it any disparagement for a man to be a learner of things that are so excellent and advantagious? Lastly, let the Disciples of Christ consider their Estate, and it is no disparagement unto them to be learners; for their State is a State of imperfection, and the Ministry was set up for the perfecting of the Saints. 4 *Eph.* 12. When *Eunomius*, that proud Heretick, boasted how he knew the Divinity, *Basil* gravelled him in no lesse than one and twenty questions about the Body of an Aunt, or Pismire. *Sure it is, a Wise Man will hear and increase Learning.* 1 Prov 5. *Give instruction to a Wise Man, and he will be yet Wiser, teach a Iust Man, and he will increase in Learning.* 9 Prov. 9. Therefore let none think it a disgrace to them to sit in the Learners form, till they be advanced to the University of Heaven, to have Society with the Spirits of Just Men made perfect. *David Chytraus*, when he lay a dying, lift up himself to hear the discourses of his Friends, that sate by him; and said, that he should dye with better chear, if he might dye learning something.

12 *Heb.* 23. *Si moribundus etiam aliquid didicisset. Melch. Adam.*

By this then let us make trial of the truth of our Profession. We do confidently perswade our selves, and professe unto others, that we are the Disciples of Christ, if we be so indeed then we are Learners, that is, such as hear instruction and grow Wise, and refuse it not, watching dayly at Wisdoms Gates. 8 *Prov.* 33, 34. It is the property of a Learner to be humble, sensible

of

of his ignorance, and self-denying; not proud, self-conceited, or wise in his own eyes. The *Rabbins* have a saying, that he who learneth of himself, hath a Fool to his Master: and *Solomon* tells us, that there is more hope of a Fool, than the man that is wise in his own conceit. 20 *Prov.* 12. Therefore he that would be wise, must be a Fool, that he may be wise. It is another property of a learner to reverence his teachers; So are we commanded *to know them that Labour amongst us, and are over us in the Lord, and admonish us, and to esteem them more highly for their works sake.* 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13. Heretofore they have accounted *the very feet of them beautiful, that brought glad tidings of Peace.* 10. *Rom.* 15. And *Herod* an Hypocrite, did for a time not only rejoyce in hearing *Johns* Doctrine, but was also very observant of his Person, Now if these be the characteristical Notes of a Disciple, we may justly suspect, that as there were many, who said they were Jews, but were not; so there are many, who call themselves Disciples, that are not so indeed, yea that would take it in scorn to be thought learners. For though the Priests lips preserve knowledge, and the people should seek the Law at his Mouth, because he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hostes; yet generally men are so conceited of themselvs, and have such under-valuing conceits of their Teachers (because their fellow-creatures, and subject to like passions as they are) that they judge this a very servile, and therefore too submisse a course; This makes me think, as he said πλείονες μίμοι ἢ πολῖται, there were more Imitators than true Citizens; so that in our days we have more Imitators, than true Christians, even amongst those that are more strictly so taken.

1 *Cor.* 3. 18.

6 *Mark.* 20.

3 *Rev.* 9.

2 *Mala.* 7.

5 *Iam.* 17.

So I passe from *Dorcas* Profession, to her Practice; those two must not be seperated; for the most glorious profession of Religion without good works, is most grosse Hypocrisie, and he that is barren in good works, and yet bears high and broad the sail of Profession, seems to be afraid lest the World should not take notice of him for an Hypocrite. Good works likewise, without a knowledge and profession of Christian Religion, are no better than glorious Sins, as *Augustine* calls them; no better than the virtues of Heathens, unto which though we give the name, yet they want the nature of virtue. For as *Bernard* said, What have you Heathens to do with virtues, who are ignorant of Christ, the virtue and power of God unto Salvation? But where a profession of Religion, and a practice of good

Splendida peccata.

Quid vobis (ethnici) cum virtutibus, qui christum dei virtutem ignoratis?

works are in conjunction, they make *integrum sanctum*, an entire, sincere, compleat Saint. Such an one was *Dorcas* in those days, such an one was the *Dorcas* of our days. First in general, *Full of good works*; then more particularly, *and Almes-deeds which she did.*

I. In general, *She was full of good works.* When it is said that *Dorcas* was full of good works, it is not meant, that she was perfect, for in many things we offend all; and every Sin is a defect. Much lesse may we think, that She did works of super-errogation; They are super-arrogant, that think themselves righteous above the Rule; As full as *Dorcas* was, I dare say for her blessed Soul, that She thought her self empty and barren. Ears that are most laden with Corn, hang lowest down to the ground; and holiest Persons have alwayes the humblest thoughts of themselves. Hereby therefore I conceive, are meant three things. 1. She was full of, that is, abundant in good works, as when it is said, that *Jehojada* waxed old, and was full of days, the meaning is, he grew very old: and when it is said of wicked worldly men, that they are full of Children, 17 *Psal.* 14. the meaning is, they have many Children: So *Dorcas* was full of good works, that is, she was a very good woman, and did abound in good works; To be full of good works, is as much as to be fruitful. *Dorcas* her good works were not few, as the gleaning Grapes, when the Vintage is done, or as the shaking of an Olive Tree, two or three Berries in the top of the uttermost bough, four or five in the most fruitful branches thereof; but she was full of good works, like the Vine before it is gathered, and the Olive Tree before it be shaken. 2. She was full of good works, that is, She did not only abound, but in some sort super-abound, considering her condition: She did very many good works, even beyond the expectation of those that knew her, when they compared what She did, as they imagined with what She had: they would not have thought, that She had so rich a Treasury, that would have furnished her to expend so liberally. They could not but think, that her fulnesse of good works abroad, would bring her to want at home: Yet so it was, She did many good works; nor did they draw her dry, but some way or other She was supplyed, that She still did more; it is very probable that *Dorcas* was not a woman of great worldly Estate, and if she had not been notable for her good works, She might in other respects have lived obscurely enough

3 *Jam.* 2.

2 *Chro.* 24,25.

24 *Isa.* 13.

17 *Isa.* 5.

enough: But whatever her estate was She had a free heart, and did not for fear of wanting her self, hold back her hand from supplying the necessities of others. The Widow that cast her two Mites into the Treasury, is said to have cast in more than they that cast in greater gifts, because what they gave was out of their abundance; but she cast in all that she had. So *Dorcas* was full of good works, that is, She did abound, yea she did super-abound comparing her abilities with her expence, She did more than she was supposed able to do, 3. She was full of good works, that is, her works were not only abounding, but abiding; She did not satisfie her self with what good she had done, but still she did more; with the Apostle she forgot that which was behind; and though shee had done very much good, yet still she with-held not her hand; according to the injunction 6 *Gal.* 9, 10. *Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not, as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good.* Out of the good Treasure of her heart, She was still bringing forth good things. She was like the Orange-tree, of which they write, that it is bringing forth fruit all the year long, as some are ripe, so others are still budding: And as it is said of the Church of *Thyatira*, her works were more at the last, than at the first. Hereby She made it appear that she was no Hypocrite, who is moved by an external principle, and doth his good works only for particular ends, and therefore continues not always to do good: But She was a sincere Christian, whose good works flowed from an inward Principle of grace, and were directed to an universal end, Gods glory. So then *Dorcas* was full of good works, that is, She did very much good, more than could be expected from such a Woman, and thus she continued to her death; and so was one of those blessed servants, whom her Lord, when he came, found well-doing.

21, *Luk.* 1, 2, 3.

3 *Phil.* 13.

11 *Eccles.* 6.

12 *Math.* 39.

2 *Rev.* 19.

24 *Mat.* 46.

Good works are sometime strictly taken for works of Charity because that Love is the fulfilling of the Law, *& hac sibi Deus vel pro sacrificiis, vel pra sacrificiis placere testatur*, God accepts of works of Charity for sacrifices, with such sacrifices God is well-pleased, 13 *Hebr.* 16. Yea he accepts them before sacrifices, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*, 9 *Math.* 13. But oftentimes good works are taken more largely for the whole obedience of a Christian, so we are said to be Gods workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Sure it is, the Law is the Rule of good works and therefore obedience to any branch

Aug. lib. 10. *de civ. Dei ca.* 1.

2 *Eph.* 10.

1 *Joh.* 3. 4.

of the Law is a good work; as the breach of any part of the Law is an evil work; and as the *Logicians* say, there is no created being, but it is reduced into one of the ten predicaments; so there is no duty or good work commanded of us, but it is contained in one of those ten words, as *Moses* calls them, that is Commandments. These good works in other places of Scripture are called good Fruits, 3 *Jam.* 17. Fruits of righteousnesse, 1 *Phil.* 11. Fruits of the Spirit, 5 *Gal.* 2. Fruits worthy of Repentance, 3 *Luk.* 8. and amongst many other expressions, they are called armour of light, 13 *Rom.* 12. Good works therefore are of a very large extent; yet it hath pleased the Holy-Ghost, to reduce them under three heads, 2 *Tit.* 12. Sobriety towards our selves, Honesty towards our neighbour, and Godlinesse towards God. So that when it is said, *Dorcas* was full of good works, the meaning is this, She was very Sober, Honest and Godly in respect of her disposition; and full of Acts of sobriety, honesty and godlinesse in her conversation.

10 *Dist.* 4.

Only take notice of this, before I come to the Doctrine. Though *Dorcas* be here commended for her good works, yet the Scripture speaketh sometimes of good works by way of Diminution and debasing of them; which in what respect it is done, is very necessary for us to observe. Take notice therefore, when good works are compared with the righteousnes of Christ, in relation to justification, then they are rejected as unable for any such use, and called menstruous rags, 64 *Is.* 6. dross and dung, 3 *Phil.* 8. when the best works we do, are considered in the Court of Justification, there they are damnable and have so much dross in them, that God doth reject them as wholly insufficient: but look on them as fruits of Faith, done out of obedience to Gods command, and with respect to his Glory, and so the Scripture doth highly commend them. Thus then the Scripture commends good works against the Antinomian, who holds them unnecessary: but condemns good works, yea the best works, against the Papist, who holds them to be meritorious whereas when we have done all, we must say that we are unprofitable, and acknowledge with *Augustine*, that unless God did spare in mercy, he should find none, whom he might Crown in justice; surely he that relyes upon his works, doth like a man that on a moon-shinie night mistakes his own shadow for a bridge, and so falls into the River and is drowned.

Nisi Deus per misericordiam pareret; non haberet quos per justitiam coronaret, in Ps. 100.

Now let the observation be this; All that make profession of the

the Gospel should accompany their profession with fruitfullness in good works. So *Paul* gave in charge to *Titus*; *These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have beleeved in God be carefull to maintain good works* 3 *Tit.* 8. two greek words are observable προϊστασθαι that it be their care and study, the bent of their minds, προϊστασθαι. to maintain, or rather to be examples and presidents, going before others in good works; these are the highest and most usuall styles of commendation in Scripture. *Moses*, a man mighty in words and deeds. *Coruelius*, a man fearing God and giving much Alms. The *Centurion* worthy of favour, for He hath built us a Synagogue. *Dorcas* made so many Coats for the poor. *Gaius*, the Host of the Church. *Onesiphorus* hath *Paul* his earnest Prayers for mercy, because he often refreshed him; and as one observes wittily, the Scripture speaks but little of the learning of the Apostles, but much of their Acts.

7 *Act.* 22. 10 *Act* 2. 7 *Luk* 4. 5. 9 *Act.* 39. 16 *Rom.* 23. 2 *Tim.* 1. 16.

The reasons why Professours of the Gospel should be full of good works are these, 1 because true Christian Religion doth not consist meerly in Negatives. It is not sufficient to abstain from evil, except we do good; cease to do evil, learn to do well, 1 *Isa.* 27. *That Tree which bears not good Fruit, is a Cumberer of the ground, and shall be cut down for the Fire; as well as that which bears ill fruit and poysons the ground.* We must not only put off Wrath, Malice, Blasphemy, filthy Communication and Lying, but put on also bowels of Mercie, Kindnesse, Humblenesse of mind, Meeknesse, Long-suffering, and above all Charity, which is the bond of Perfection. Thou sayst that thou art no Extortioner, unjust, or Adulterer; but this is not sufficient; thou tellest of the evil works which thou dost not; but where are the good works thou dost? though he be usually accounted a good man, that doth no evil; yet he is rather an evil man (saith *Chrysostome*) that doth no good. And we read that at the day of Judgement men shall be condemned, not only for the evil that they have done, but for the good that they have left undone. Many there are that seem to be Religious, when they deceive their own hearts; For pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the Father-lesse and the Widow, and to keep our selves unspotted from the world. Hereby we give testimony of the truth of our Profession, when we are fruitfull in good works; For he that professeth himself to be a Christian and is barren in good works, is like a painted

13 *Luk.* 7. 3 *Colos.* 8. &c. 18 *Luk* 11. 25 *Matth.* 1 *Jam.* 27.

tree

Tree, that ſtands only for ſhew; like *Zeuxes* Vine, painted ſo lively, that the Birds came to pick at it, thinking to have filled their bellies, but went away hungry, as they came: or like the Fig-tree in the Goſpel, of which Chriſt thought to have eaten, but when he came near, it had nothing but leaves; as one *Moſes* renowned for piety, ſaid to *Lucius* reputed an *Arrian* Biſhop, tendring the confeſſion of his Faith to clear himſelf; Tuſh ſaith he, what telleſt thou me of the Faith of the Ears? let me have the Faith of the Hands: So thou telleſt me, that thou art a conſtant hearer of the word, thou art able to diſcourſe out of it; but (Oh man) what telleſt thou me of the Faith of the Ears, or the Faith of the Tongue? let me ſee the Faith of the Hands. Few (I confeſſe) troubled with the deaf and dumb Spirits in theſe times, but moſt having withered Hands. It was a ſaying of *John Huſſe*, that where good works are not without, there Faith is not within; and ſo ſome learned men ſay, that good works are neceſſary to preſerve a man in the State of Juſtification, though they do not immediately concurr to the Act: as in a man, although his Shoulders and Breaſt do not immediately concurr to the Act of Seeing, yet if a mans Eyes and Head were not knit to thoſe parts, he could not ſee; and though the Fire do not burn, as it is light, yet it could not burn, unleſſe it were ſo. The chief ſcope of St. *James* his Epiſtle, is to urge hearers to be doers, and vain boaſters of juſtifiing Faith, to juſtifie their Faith by their works.

21 *Mat.* 18. 19. *Ruffin. Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib.* 2. *c.* 10.

Ubi bona opera non apparent ad extra, ibi fides non eſt ad intra. *Mr. Burgeſſe.*

2. God is glorified by good works; therefore ſaith our Maſter, 5 Mat. 16. *Let your light ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorifie your Father, which is in Heaven.* The men, for whom our Heavenly Father is Glorified, are ſuch whoſe works ſhine before men; who warm the Loins of the Poor, and by their knowledge are an Eye to the blind. For ſuch men God is bleſſed of men, and ſuch men ſhall be bleſſed of God in their Deeds. The Sun it ſelf, if it did not ſhine, and give warmth unto the Creatures, were the glorious Face thereof ten times more glorious than it is, none would half ſo much bleſſe God for it.

31 *Job* 20. 29 *Job* 15. 1 *Jam.* 25.

3. Good works were one end of Chriſts death. 2 *Tit.* 14. there the Apoſtle ſaith, that Chriſt dyed, to purchaſe unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works, not only followers but zealous; and leſt men ſhould think, that we ſhould only preach free-grace, theſe things ſpeak (ſaith he) and exhort.

So

So it is said, that he suffered for Sin, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps: *Now he went about doing good.* Act. 10. 38. *And himself bare our Sins in his own body on the Tree, that we being dead unto Sin, should live unto righteousnesse.* 1 Pet. 2. 24. 1 Pet. 1. 21.

4. Good works are an ornament to our profession. When we are full of good works, we walk as becommeth the Gospel, and adorn the Doctrine of God and our Saviour. A Christian, though, like *Leah*, tender-ey'd, and cannot see farr into the mysteries of Religion, yet if fruitful, is more honourable than barren *Rachel*, though fair and beautiful for parts and knowledge; The credit of the Gospel should be dear to the Professours of it, and woe to him who maketh that worthy name, by which he is named, to be evil spoken off. Hence flows another, Good works being an honour to our profession, they will put to shame, and silence prophane persons, who are ready to take all occasions to Blaspheme; yea through our good conversation, we may be instrumental for the gaining of those that are without. *Chrysostome* calls good works, unanswerable syllogismes, invincible demonstrations, to confute and convert Pagans Phil. 27. 2 Tit. 10. 2 Jam. 7. 1 Pet. 2. 15. 1 Pet. 3. 16. 1 Pet. 3. 1. ανυλλογισμους ἀναμαχητους.

1. Then if this be our Doctrine; it is manifest that the Papists do most falsly charge us to be ἀργολους, despisers, yea condemners of good works. We condemn them in no other sense than the Scripture condemnes them, otherwise we commend them as the best signs of a living Faith, and the expressions of thankfulnesse to God for redeeming us by his Son. And therefore we think *Ursine* hath very fitly entituled his tractate of good works *de gratitudine*. We say that God commands good works, is well pleased with them, and glorified by them, and though they cannot merit eternal life (for that is the gift of God) yet there is in them an ordinability to eternal life, which is not in evil works; And they do render the Subject capable of Heaven, whereas evil works do wholly unfit him. Therefore we are ever pressing upon our Auditors, to learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful, 3 Tit. 14. And we teach them, that good works are necessary in a fourfold respect: 1. *Necessitate præcepti*, by the necessity of precept; this is the will of God. 1 Pet. 2. 15. 2. *Necessitate ordinis*, by the necessity of an inviolable order, whereby a rational Creature is obliged to yield all obedience to his Creator. 3. *Necessitate* *Appl.* 6 Rom. 23.

con-

consequentia, by a necessity of consequence, because good works do flow from the very essence and being of Faith. Lastly, *Necessitate medii sive hypotheseos*, by a necessity of the means, or a conditional necessity: for though no man can be saved for his works, yet without good works he shall not be saved; for if
8 Rom. 13. yee live after the flesh, yee shall dye: and whatsoever a man
4 Galat. 7. soweth, that shall he also reap: therefore good works are according to *Bernard*, *Via ad regnum*, though not *causa regnandi*.

2. It reproves such, as make profession of the Gospel, and yet instead of being full of good works, are full of evil works;
32 Deut. 32. concerning whom it may be said, that their Vine is the Vine of *Sodom*, and of the fields of *Gomorrha*, their Grapes are Grapes of Gall, their clusters are bitter. Their works are works of the flesh, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness,
5 Gal. 19. Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like; Of some one, or more of these they are full. These men are the scandal of the Gospel, and by how much Christian Religion is the best of Religions, by so much are these the worst of men; and no man so vile in the eyes of
10 Luk. 33. God, and Men, as a debauched Christian, he doth not only
4 Joh. 22. bring shame, but also suspicion upon his profession; for however the Samaritan, not the Jew, relieved the distressed Traveller; yet the Jews Religion was true, not the Samaritans; So in other cases, truth of causes must not be judged by Acts of Persons: Yet as he said, it must needs be good that *Nero* persecutes, so many are ready to say, it cannot be good, surely it cannot but be evil, that such a wicked wretch professeth. What shall I say to such? do yee think it enough to say, that you have
3 Mat. 9, 10. *Abraham* to your Father? Will you Steal, Murder, commit
7 Jer. 9, 10. Adultry, Swear falsly, and come and stand before God in the
8 Joh. 44. House called by his name, and say, we are delivered to do all these abominations? shall I tell you, that yee are of your Father the Devil, and his works you doe? take it how you will; the Scripture saith expresly, that the Devil worketh in Children
2 Eph. 2. of Disobedience, such as thou art. Or Lastly, Shall I tell thee? that for such works, comes the wrath of God upon the Chil-
5 Eph. 6. dren of Disobedience. Thou art full of evill works, God is full of patience, that doth not as yet pour out of the Vials of his wrath upon thee, but take heed, what thou dost, God is prest
2 Am. 3. under thee as a Cart, that is full of sheavs; if the Axeltree of

his

his Patience break, the burthen will fall on thee, a burthen so heavy, that thou wouldst be glad to change it for Rocks and Mountains. 6 Rev. 15.

3. Let us all be exhorted, in this to make *Dorcas* our pattern. She was neither Idle, Evil, nor Unfruitful; Not Idle, for we read of her works: not Evil, for her works were good: not Unfruitful, for she was full of them. 1. *Dorcas* was not Idle, for we read of her works. She was none of those Women, that learn to be idle, and wander about from House to House. Good works (saith *Gerhard*) in Scripture are taken, not only for external actions, but for inward affections to good; but it pleased the Holy Ghost to use the name of works, rather than habits or affections, because the praise of true virtue consists in action. Sure it is, man was made for action: and though some Sciences, in comparison of others more operative, are termed speculative; yet not one of them, whose speculation tends not to, and ends in some operation, whereby man is advantaged, and God honoured; specially Divinity, which is, *scientia affectiva & effectiva*. We lose the sweetnesse of all our speculations, reading and discourfing about Divinity, if we reduce them not into good works; It is the profit of practice, which makes the study of the Law so sweet; and that is accounted the best pasture, which is seen in the flesh and fleece of the Sheep. To little purpose it is, that we do *excolere animum*, Till and sow our minds with the Seeds of good notions, if these Seeds bring not forth fruit in our works and actions. The blessing of *Daniels* pulse and water, was seen in the fatnesse and well-favouredness of his countenance: So the blessing, that God gives to all our Meditating, Reading, Hearing, and Discourfing, is seen by our fruitfulnesse of good works. What is a man the better for the Seed he soweth, if it rot in the ground, or bring not forth a crop, that will reward him for his labour? If a mans Meat be sweet, and doth not nourish him, it is a sign of an ill digestion; and thy notions are raw, indigested notions, if they turn not into actions and operations. And as we lose the sweetnesse, so others lose the benefit of our speculations, if not converted into good works; therefore an idle person is not unfitly compared to the dumb jack in a Virginal, which the other dance out a sweet and winning Musick, it disturbs the whole body with an ill-distempered harshnesse. 2. *Dorcas* was not Evil, for her works were good. 1 Tim. 5. 13. *In Loc. Com.* 1. 1 Dan. 15.

One might better be idle, than not well-employed, for to be
1 Cor. 3. 15. sure, his work shall be burnt, if he be not burnt for his work: so that he is sure every way to receive losse; and he that is not imployed in doing a good work, suffers a double losse, both *propter lucrum cessans & propter damnum emergens*: For whilst a man hath been doing evil, he might have been doing some good, which would have proved an advantage to him, therefore in that respect he suffers losse; but he hath been doing evil, which will prove unto him evil, and here is a double losse. Now unto the Constitution of a good work, many things are required; especially these four, a right Rule, a right Motive, a right Principle, a right End.

1. A right Rule, that is, the Law of God. As the Artificer can draw no good line, which is not commensurate to the Rule; So neither is any work thou dost, good (though never so specious) if not conformable to the Word. *In vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandements of men.* 15 *Mat.* 9. The blind whelps of will, worship, and ignorant devotion, God regards not. Counterfeit Coin is so farr from being currant, that the Coining of it is a capital Crime; and all works which have not the stamp of Gods word upon them, are so farr from being acceptable, that they are abominable to him; and he rejects them with a, *who hath*
1 *Isa.* 12. *required these things at your hands.*

2. A right Motive; Unto a good work it is requisite that we do not only what is commanded; but that we do it *ex intuitu voluntatis*, because it is commanded. In all good works, there must be not only a knowledge of, but a respect to the will of
1 *Thes.* 4. 3. God, which is therefore used so frequently, as an argument to
2 *Thes.* 5. 18. enforce our obedience, because we ought to do every thing in
1 *Pet.* 2. 15. conscience to Gods command: For to do that which God
12 *Rom.* 2. wils, and not to do it, because he wils it, is not obedience,
5 *Eph.* 17. and therefore not a good work.
7 *Mat.* 16.
4 *Jer.* 14.
18 *Ezek.* 31. 3. A right Principle, and that is a good heart. Do men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles? a corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Such as the Fountain is, such are the Streams. Therefore we are commanded to wash our Hearts; to make unto our selves new Hearts; because we must be good, before we can do good. When the People of *Israel* promised, that they would do all that God had commanded them by *Moses*, What saith God, *Oh that there were such an Heart in them*, 5

Deut. 29. It is not for thee to promiſe, that thou wilt lead a new life, endeavour to be full of good works; Oh labour to get ſuch an Heart in thee. By nature wee are wild Olives, therefore we muſt by Humiliation be cut off from our own Stocks, and by Faith put into Chriſt, and ſo the property of the ground of our Hearts alter'd and meliorated, ere we can bring forth good Fruit. Therefore we affirm, that an unregenerate man cannot do a good work; for they that are in the fleſh, cannot pleaſe God; and wickedneſſe will proceed from the wicked.

4. A right end, and that is Gods glory; whereunto all our Actions muſt be referred, or elſe ſeem they never ſo good, they are no better than Phariſaical. Therefore the Apoſtle prays, that the *Philippians* might be fill'd with Fruits of Righteouſneſs, to the glory and praiſe of God, 1 *Phil.* 11. It is the mark that directs the eye; Therefore where a mans mark is not good, his aim is nought, and ſo is his Action. No Creature, we ſay, was made by it ſelf; and therefore not made for it ſelf, but him that made it: So there is no good work, which we can do of our ſelves, therefore we ought not to do it for our ſelves; but for his praiſe, from whom we have the power. And I make no queſtion, but ſo farr as a man is convinced, that what good he doth is from God, and not himſelf, ſo farr will he direct, the good that he doth unto God and not to himſelf. Therefore a true Chriſtian aſcribes the glory of his good works to God, as the Author; and directs his good works to the glory of God, as his end.

Laſtly, *Dorcas* was not unfruitful, for ſhe was full of good works. This was the praiſe of the *Romans*, that they were full of goodneſſe, 15. *Rom.* 14. of *Stephen*, that he was full of Faith and power, 6 *Act.* 8. and of *Barnabas*, that he was a good man, and full of the Holy-Ghoſt, and of Faith, 11 *Act.* 24. This was their praiſe, and will be ours if we be ſuch, or in truth endeavour to be ſo: Yet this is a ſmall thing in compariſon of the Glory, that ſhall redound to God (for what is our praiſe to Gods glory) now herein (ſaith our Lord) is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit, 15 *Ioh.* 8. A Chriſtian in Scripture is compared to a Vine; and a Vine brings forth Fruit by Cluſters, not here and there a Grape, but cluſters of Grapes: Beloved, you all profeſſe your ſelves to be engrafted into Chriſt, I tell you, it is a diſhonour to the Root, on which you profeſſe your ſelves to grow, to bear ſuch unprofitable branches.

A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, thy plants are an Orchard of Pomegranates with pleasant fruits, Camphire with Spikenard, Spikenard and Saffron, Calamus and Cinamon, with all Trees of Frank-Incense, Mirrhe and Aloes, with all the chief Spices; thus Christ sets out his Church 4 *Cant.* 12. She was a Garden full of all the varieties of the heavenly Trees and flowers of Grace. And it may be said of every Tree of this Garden, as of the teeth of Christ 4 *Cant.* 2. they are like a flock of sheep even shorn, which come up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins and none is barren amongst them. It is a great shame for any of us not to be fruitfull, whom God hath planted in a soil so fruitfull of all things pertaining both to Life and Godlinesse. But our barrenness in good works may justly provoke God to turn our fruitfull Land into barrenneſse; and not only take away his own Corn and his Wine and his Oyl, his Wool and his Flax from us, but even the Gospel it self and give it to a Nation that will bring forth the fruits of it. Especially I have it in charge from the Apostle, to charge such as are rich in this world, to be rich in good works. I read, that when the Olive and Vine and Fig-tree were invited to be Kings over the rest of the Trees; they pretended, that they would not leave their Fatness, and Sweetness, and Fruitfulness for promotion; as though a man could not bear fruit and bear Rule together. God forbid, that any of you should make your riches or greatness an excuse for your barrenness in good works. But it was intended only as a Parable by him, that spake it; and so I leave it.

107 *Psal.* 34.
2 *Hos.* 9.
21 *Math.* 41.
1 *Tim.* 6 17.
9 *Jud.* 8.

I passe from *Dorcas* commendation in the general, to that thing for which she is especially commended to our imitation, which is that shee was full of alms-deeds, which she did. By alms-deeds are meant works of mercy to those that are in necessity. Now works of mercy respect either Soul or Body; those which respect the Soul are six; usually comprehended under this verse, *Instrue, Castiga, Remitte, Solare, Fer, Ora,* Instruct, Reprove, Forgive, Comfort, Sustain, and Pray. They which respect the Body are likewise six, contained in another verse, *Visito, Poto, Cibo, Recolligo Vestio, Condo,* Visit the Sick, Refresh the Thirsty, Feed the Hungry, Redeem the Captive, Cloath the Naked, and Burie the Dead. Now those works of mercy which respect the Soul, are of the two the better Alms-deeds; therefore for certain *Dorcas* did not omit them, though

else

else I think that by Alms-deeds in the Text, are chiefly understood works of mercy respecting the Body.

Observ.

Professours of the Gospel ought to be very charitable to the Poor. *I have not eaten my morsels alone* (saith *Job*) *I have seen none to perish for want of Cloathing, the loins of the Poor have blessed me, because he was warmed with the fleece of my sheep.* To passe by the example of *Zacheus*, *Cornelius*, *Philemon*, *Onesiphorus*, *Gaius* and others; the example of Christ is most notable, who though he lived by contribution himself, yet gave out a share to the poor, and had his Almoner to that purpose, 13 *Joh.* 29. though this be a common Doctrine, yet because it is not commonly practised, it will not be unnecessary to adde a reason or two to enforce it.

31 *Job.* 17.
19 *Luk.* 8.
10 *Act.* 2.
Philem. v 7.
2 *Tim.* 1 16.
16 *Rom.* 23.

1. Distributing to the necessities of the poor, is a work which God doth strictly enjoyn. Amongst many places I will select two; one out of the Old Testament 15 *Deut.* 7. 8. *If one of thy brethren with thee be poor, thou shalt not harden thine heart nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother, but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him.* The other is out of the New Testament 1 *Tim* 6. 17. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* Hearken then (my Bretheren) it is not left arbitrary to you, that you may do good if you will; but it is laid upon you as your charge and duty, and woe be to you, if ye do it not,. Do good, if ever ye look to receive good. If ever ye look to be rich in Heaven, be rich in good works upon the Earth. There must be a *Date*, ere there can be a *Dabitur*; Give and it shall be given. *He that gives to the poor, lends to the Lord, who payes large encrease for all he borrows: but how shall he give you the interest of Glory, where he hath not received the principall of beneficence?* As the *Grecian* said of very tall men, that they were *Cypress* Trees, [illegible] fair and tall but fruitless; So may I say of strait-handed richmen; and these *Cypresses* are not for the garden of Paradice; none shall ever be planted there but the fruitfull. If the first Paradice had any Trees in it, only for pleasure; I am sure the second, which is in the midst of the new *Jerusalem*, shall have no Tree that bears not twelve Fruits, yea whose very leaves are not beneficial.

Bishop Hall in a Serm. on 1 Tim. 6. 17

19 *Prov.* 17.

22 *Rev.* 2.

2. Give me leave to ask you this question: if you knew what

to offer unto God, that might be pleasing and acceptable to him;
43 Gen. 11. would ye not do it? are ye not glad, that ye have any thing wherewith to present a great man (whose favour you need) that he delights in and will accept of? and methinks, you should be glad, that you have any thing, wherewith you may do a work that is pleasing to the Majesty of Heaven and Earth. Well mind that of the Apostle, 13 *Hebr.* 16. *To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* the word is εὐαρεστεῖται God is delighted or more properly (as he observes in his Criticks) *hilariter affectus*, cheerfully affected with such sacrifices. Beloved, I beseech you, consider; shall not we poor men, we sinfull men, who are worms and no men, between whom and God there is such an infinite distance as cannot be expressed, shall not we rejoyce from our hearts, that we can do any thing, which may be acceptable and well-pleasing to God, which may delight and give complacency to him? you see, what will please him. Oh be not so backward to do that which God is so forward to accept of: be not so unkind as to withhold that from God, which he is so ready to take as so great a kindnesse from you. The Lord stands not in need of any of
32 Job. 2. 3. your gifts, yet he is pleased with your ingenuity: you cannot be profitable to the Almighty, but you may be pleasing to him; and what is there you can desire more than acceptance with God and Christ, who tels you, that whatever ye do to the least of his Brethren, he takes it as done unto himself, 25 *Math.* 40.

Lastly consider, that by giving you shall gain; as the bread
34 Math. broken in the Gospel, multiplyed. Ask and have is the rule of Prayer; but give and have is the rule of Liberality. He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, His horn shall be exalted with honour, 112 *Psal.* 9. He shall have a *Cornu-Copia* of blessings, Riches, and Honour too, to boote: and his Arms shall be an horn effundent in a barren Field. That saying of *Leo* is worthy our observation; the Divine justice and wisdom (saith he) suffers many to labour under great miseries, that he might crown the miserable for their patience, and the mercifull for their benevolence. *Paul* compares giving of Alms to the sowing of Corn, 2 *Cor.* 9. 6. now as sowing Corn turns more to the benefit of him, that soweth it, than of the Earth that receiveth the Seed; so in giving of Almes, the advantage is more to the Giver than the Receiver. This is one advantage you see: The times we live in are times of great sickness and visitation now

Miseros pro patientia, misericordes pro benevolentia.

Ad seminantis potius quàm ad suscipientis lucra cedit. Ambr.

God

God hath promiſed, that he will have a ſpecial care over ſuch, as are merciſull to the poor, 41 *Pſal.* 1. Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor, the Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the bed of languiſhing, thou wilt make all his bed in his ſickneſſe, thou knoweſt not how ſoon it may be thy lot, to be viſited with ſickneſſe: If thou conſidereſt the condition of thy poor Brethren in diſtreſs, thou art ſure to have carefull attendance, honourable attendance, not only an attendance of Angels, but God himſelf; he will make thy bed and ſtrengthen thee upon thy bed. This Certainly is a great Priviledge, and thou canſt not believe it and be inconſiderate in this caſe. Again, hereby thou ſhalt convey a bleſſing to thy Poſterity, 37 *Pſal.* 26. he is ever merciſull and lendeth, and his ſeed is bleſſed. Thirdly, this is a means to ſanctifie your Eſtates to you; 11 *Luk.* 41. give Almes of ſuch things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you. But Laſtly, 19 *Mat.* 29. what is all this to that hundredfold, which you ſhall receive in the life to come? when you ſhall for the bread that ye have dealt to the hungry, be fed everlaſtingly with heavenly Manna, Angels food: for the water wherewith you have refreſhed the Thirſty, drink of the Well of life for evermore: For the Garments wherewith you have covered the naked, walk with the Lamb in white: and for every pecuniary act of charity, receive a Crown and a kingdom glorious, incorruptible, and that fadeth not away.

Be pleaſed likewiſe to receive this Doctrine with all readineſs of mind. I cannot but complain of a great Famine and Dearth of Alms-deeds, though (bleſſed be God) we have neither a Famine of Bread nor of hearing the Words of the Lord. What ſhould be the reaſon of it, I know not, it is becauſe men are afraid of Poperie and dare not give much, leſt they ſhould be thought ambitious to merit thereby? No, No; the reaſon is, becauſe the pride and private luxury of our days are ſuch, that they cannot maintain theſe but with the ſtarving of Charity: this makes men that they are ever coveting, and yet ſo far from giving that they never have enough: Like unto Kites and Gleads that are ever watching and catching for prey, and yet remain Carrion-lean, becauſe converting the greateſt part of of their nouriſhment into long feathers. We ſee it is ordinary for walls to be cloathed and men to go naked, yea as *Jerome* complaind, Walls and Pillars of Houſes ſhining with Gold, and Chriſt in a poor man ready to dye, naked and hungry before the doors. Oh ſurely

Appl.

8 *Amos* 11.

4 *Jam.* 2. 3.

Auro parietes, auro laquearia, auro fulgent capita columnarum, & nudus atque eſuriens ante fores noſtras Chriſtus in pauperе moritur.

Hieron. ad Gaudent.

surely, much of this might be spared and given to the Poor; but so it is come to pass, that the lean Kine have devoured the fat and it cannot be known (but by their pride) than they have eaten them up. This makes the Papists to call us Solifidians; and gives occasion to others, to break such jests on the heads of men eminent in the Church, as he did upon the Jesuits (whom in forain Nations they call Apostles) the Apostles indeed shewed the World Heaven, left the Earth to Earthly men and got Heaven themselves: but we are more beholding to our new ones, For they shew us Heaven, leave it to us to purchase, in the mean time seeking only for themselves earthly possessions. I beseech you therefore, as yee tender the credit of your Profession, that you would make more conscience of this duty, as ye abound in Faith, in Utterance and Knowledg; see that ye abound in this grace also, 2 *Cor.* 8. 7. and remember the words of our Lord Jesus how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive. You cannot say, (as they 25 *Math.*) When saw we any hungry or athirst, or strangers, or naked, or sick, or in Prison, and did not minister unto them? you either see or hear of such every day; the world is an Hospital full of them, why then do ye not minister unto them *Bernard* shall tell you; ask a covetous rich man, what he thinks of those, that laying out what they have for Gods glory and the relief of those that are in necessity, do thereby purchase unto themselves the rich merchandise of heaven with their earthly substance: whether they do wisely or no? without doubt he will say, that they do wisely. Ask him again, why he himself doth not that, which he so well approves of in another? I cannot, will he say, why? Madam Covetousness (or Madam Pride) will not suffer me. But remember that he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy, 2 *Jam.* 13. whereof we have an example in *Dives*, who because he would not give *Lazarus* a crum on Earth to slay his hunger, was denyed a drop in Hell to quench his own thirst.

41 *Gen.* 19. 20 21.

20 *Act.* 35.

Serm. 21 *sup. Cantic.*

Procul dubiò respondebit, sapienter.

Profectò domina avaritia non permittit.

16 *Luke.*

But whilst I am stirring you up to this duty, I may not forget to give you some directions in the practice of it. 1. The Alms which you give, give them freely. This is the rule, Let him that sheweth mercy, do it with cheerfulnesse 12 *Rom.* 8. For God loveth a cheerfull Giver 2 *Cor.* 9. 7. if your Alms are extorted from you, they cannot be called benevolence, because not coming with good will. I know not well what to call it, but give it what name you will, I am sure it is not acceptable to God.

For

For the will is so greatly concernd in this businesse, that where there is not ability, God accepts it for the deed, 2 *Cor.* 8. 12 therefore whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, 3 *Colos.* 23. let thy fountains flow forth (saith *Solomon*) 5 *Prov.* 16. To note how free we should be in works of this nature, that our Alms should come from us like water out of a Fountain, and not like water out of a Still, that is forced by Fire. And to shew this Freenesse, we should not always stay till we be asked, but consider the Poor and so take a course to releive their modesty, as 41 *Psal.* 1. well as their necessity. For there are many needfull, that yet are unwilling to ask. We should not expect, but prevent the crying of the Poor. God Forbid, the Heavens should not rain, till the Earth first open her mouth; For there is some ground, that will sooner burn then chap.

2. What Alms you give, give them with compassion. So we are commanded to remember them that are in Bonds, as bound with them, 13 *Hebr.* 3. This is called a drawing out of the Soul to the hungry, 58 *Isa.* 10. It is one thing to give our goods, another thing to give our affection. He that gives his goods to the Poor, gives that which he is without himself, but he that gives compassion, gives part of himself. *Aliud est dare indigenti, aliud affectum misericordiæ cum indigente partiri.* Anselm.

3. What Alms you give, give discreetly. I think, I need not advise any to give more than he is able; For every one will be carefull enough to look to that. And indeed it is a mans wisdome, so to help to light his neighbours candle, that he do not put out his own. Surely none need be more bountifull in giving, than the Sun is in shining, which though freely bestowing his beams on the World, keeps notwithstanding the body of light to himself. But we should be discreet in judging of the persons, to whom we give. Some have ranked the Poor into three sorts. First Gods poor, or Christs poor, such as have suffered loss of Estate for Christ, or being otherwise fallen into poverty make profession of the Gospel. Secondly, the Worlds Poor; such as have descended from poor Parents and so live in a poor estate. Thirdly, the Devils poor; such as have Riotously wasted their substance, whatever it was, more or less; that by wickednes have consumed their Estates, and after they are consumed, do yet continue in their wickedness being notoriously vicious and debauched. Now certainly we are to have pitty on all these, but not all alike. Christs poor are most to be pitryed, the Worlds poor next, the Divels poor least of all. Yet they must *Pauperes Christi.* *Pauperes mundi.* *Pauperes Diaboli.*

not be wholly neglected, but as we would do all good offices to their Souls, so we must not deny the doing of necessary offices to their bodies. Do good to all, but especially to the houshold of Faith.

& Gal. 10.

4. What Alms you give, give them in simplicity, 12, *Rom.* 8. Not like the Hipocrite, that bloweth a trumpet before his Alms, that he may have glory of men. Our left hand must not know what our right hand doth *6 Math.* 3. upon which some have commented thus, let not thy left hand, that is, thy wife, know what thy right hand, that is, thy self doth. Others thus, let not thy left hand, that is, thy most familiar Friend, know what thy right hand, that is, thy self doth. But the scope of our Saviour is plain, which is to warn us against Hipocrisie and vain-glory in giving Alms, For as *Maldonate* well observes upon the place; He who gives Alms to get the praise of men, gives them to himself and not to the poor; or if he give any thing, he hath rather sold than given it: The poor could not pay him for his Alms, but others do it for him; For whilst they only behold him that receives, they commend him that gives, *et pratium est illi videri*: It is a reward to him to be seen to give. Therefore *Jerome* taxed a noble Roman Dame, who being at St. *Peters* Church, there with her own hands gave peices of mony to the poor people, that she might seem to be more religious. This saith *Hierome* in his Epistle to *Nepotian*, is rather to be called an hunting after praise, than a giving of Alms in simplicity.

Vid. Maldonate.

Qui laudem hominis intuens dedit, sibi non pauperi dedit aut siquid dedit vendidit non donavit.

Ut Religiosior videretur.

Venatio magis quam eleemosyna dicenda.

5. What Alms we give, let us give them seasonably. Let us not put them off till our death. In the morning sow thy seed, (begin soon) and then hold on: In the Evening with-hold not thine hand, 11 *Eccl.* 6. I do not condemn Funeral beneficence, but I prefer the other; and I think the same may be said of Liberality, that is usually said of Repentance; true liberality is never too late, but late liberality is seldom true. He that gives not till he dyes, shews that he would not give, if he could keep it longer. That which men give thus (saith Bishop Hall) they give it by their Testament, but I can scarce say, that they give it by their Will. The good mans praise is, *Dispersit*, he hath dispersed his goods, and not left them behind him.

Pœnitentia vera nunquam sera, sed raro vera, si sera.

Psa. 111.

I read lately an Embleme of Charity comprehending all or most of these directions. A child with a merry countenance, covered in a cloud, with a bloody heart in his hand, giving ho-

Dr. Hieron on the Text.

ney

ney to a Bee without wings. First a child, to note that we ſhould begin this work early: looking merrily, to note, that we ſhould do it cheerfully: covered in a cloud, to note, that we ſhould do what we can, to hide our Liberality: with a bloody heart in the hand, to note, with what ſenſible compaſſion we ſhould do it: Laſtly, giving honey to a Bee without wings, to a Bee, not a Drone that will not work; and to a Bee without wings, that cannot work; to note, that we ſhould give diſcreetly not to the Loyterer, but to the Labourer, whom God hath diſabled from working. So much of *Dorcas* practice, She was full of good works in the General, and likewiſe of Alms-Deeds in Particular; As Mr. *Hieron* calleth her, a diſcreet, compaſſionate, cheerfull and Simple-hearted Almoner. I come now to the ſad part of my Text, and that is her ſickneſs and death. It may be, you have heard me hitherto with delight; if I now ſtirr up your grief, I cannot avoid it; But I muſt go, as I am led by the Text and the occaſion. Who would not be ready to ſay, it was pity that *Dorcas*, ſo good a Woman ſhould ail any thing, that ſhe ſhould be ſick, but much more, that ſhe ſhould die? But ſo it ſeemed good to Divine Providence. For it came to paſſe in thoſe days, that ſhe was ſick and died.

And it came to paſſe. There is a providence in and to be obſerved in the Sickneſſe and Death of Gods Saints. Pretious in the ſight of the Lord, is the Life and alſo the Death of his Saints: And if they be ſo pretious to God, how can we think, but that there ſhould be a ſpecial providence in their Sickneſſe and Death? If the hairs of their Heads are numbred, much more the days of their Sojourning; and if one of their hairs cannot fall to the ground, but by the providence of their Heavenly Father, much leſſe can their whole bodies. There is a threefold Providence of God; Firſt, General, which he exerciſeth over all his Creatures; Secondly, Special, which he exerciſeth over Man; Thirdly, Particular, which he exerciſeth over his own People. Of this laſt the Pſalmeſt ſpeaks, 56 *Pſal.* 7. Thou telleſt my wandrings, put thou my Tears into thy Bottle, are they not all in thy Book; God in his providence orders the time, when his people ſhall be ſick and Dye; the place where; the Diſeaſe of which; with all other circumſtances of that nature; and which is above all, he doth faſhion their Hearts by the ſame providence to bear Sickneſſe, and ſo diſpoſeth of things, that they are not taken away by Death, till they have

Obſerv.

116 *Pſal.* 15.

10 *Mat.* 30.

finished their work, and are fit to enter into Glory. Well then, let us see his providence, and submit to it, acknowledging the Justice, Wisdom, and Goodnesse of it. We are apt oft-times to wonder, that God should cast his people into Sickness, and take them away by Death at such a time, that he casteth them into such places (it may be) where they are at a distance from their Habitation, that they are taken away by such a sharp Disease and violently, that he doth not spare them a little to recover their strength, before they go hence; and be no more seen. Now we must answer all such questions as these, with a *sic evenit*, so it came to passe by the most wise providence of God, whose respect to his Children is such, that if he had seen any thing better, this had not been.

39 *Psal.* 13.

Observ.

It came to passe in those days, that She was Sick. Gods dearest Children are not exempted from Sickness, no more than any other affliction, it is said, 11 *Joh.* 3. Behold, he whom thou lovest is Sick. *Augustine* asks, if he were beloved, how came he to be Sick? But in outward accidents of this life, God makes no difference; Nay it is usual in providence, that they who have Gods Heart, feel Gods Hand most heavy. It is a very pretty saying of *Clemens Alexandrinus*, Gods Children are not neer him, unlesse they be within the reach of his Rod. They sit, as *Augustus* said he did, when he sate between *Virgil* and *Horace*, (the one melancholly, the other troubled with sore eyes) between sighing and weeping. All the day long have I been plagued and chastned every Morning saith *David*, 73 *Psal.* 14. When yet it is said of some wicked worldly Men, that they were not in trouble like other Men, neither were they plagued like other Men. You have read (it may be) or heard the Story of the holy *Hermite*, that having lived to a compleat Age, (though very piously) yet made a question of Gods love to him, because all that while he had not (which he could remember) felt one hours sickness: It pleased God in some short time, before he dyed to visit him with an Ague, which he blessed God for, and received as a Love-token, not scrupling that so much afterward, which formerly had troubled him. *Paul* had a racking pain, which he expresseth by a Thorn in the flesh, 2 *Cor.* 12. A learned Man thinks that he alludes to such kind of punishment, as Slaves, or Men not free, were put to for great offences. They sharpned a Stake, and pointed it with Iron, and put it in at his Back, till it came out at his Mouth, and so with his

Bi amatur, quomodo infirmatur.

Ἔγγυς δὲ θεὸς ἀνθρώπων μαστίγων.

Inter suspiria & lachrymas.

73 *Psal.* 5.

Σμικρὰ ἡ πληγή.

Mr. Manton.

his Face upward he Dyed rather of a Feaver. And therefore by that expression, the Apostle intendeth some grievous bodily distemper, or racking pain. Certainly he speaketh of such an infirmity, wherein he would Glory; and therefore it is not probable, that it should be meant of Sin, or some prevailing Lust, as many expound it; but rather of some extreme corporal pain. Yet I have observed, that Gods Children are not apt to question his Love, so much, as in Sickness. For *Satan* takes the advantage of the solitude of a Sick person, to tempt him more: and makes use of the pain and distemper of the Body, to disturb and disquiet the mind. But however Gods people have no more cause to doubt of Gods love in Sickness, than any other affliction. That which troubles them most is, that hereby they are rendred unserviceable; but where God disenableth from duty, he looks not for it, but accepts of the desire for the deed. Besides, Sickness it not such an unserviceable Estate; may not one serve God acceptably in suffring, as well as doing? As it is said in the *Revelation*, here now is the Faith and Patience of the Saints. Therefore if God shall cast your Bodies into Sickness, be not dejected, cast not down your Spirits. Gods dearest Saints have had experience of sore Sicknesses, such as *Hezekiah*, *Job*, *David*, and *Epaphroditus*. The Children of God have Bodies of the same matter and making with other men. They are but earthen vessels, subject to knocks and cracks as others are; only they have a more pretious Lamp shining in these earthen pitchers, than others have, I mean a more pretious Soul. Therefore comfort your selves, and remember that in Sickness, all your desire is before God, and your groaning is not hid from him, 38 *Psal.* 9. And though your bodily distemper indispose you for duty, yet God accepted *Hezekiahs* prayer, 38 *Isa.* 5. though when he prayed, he did but chatter like as a Crane or a Swallow. 38 *Isa.* 14. So much of *Dorcas* Sickness.

2 *Cor.* 12. 5.

14 *Revel.* 12.

38 *Isa.* 1.
7 *Job.* 3. 4.
38 *Psal.* 7.
2 *Phil.* 27.

I come now to her Death. It is very probable, that *Dorcas* had been Sick before, but not unto Death, but now *She was Sick and Dyed.* I will not break forth into any Rhetoricall Declamations against the cruelty of Death, yet the Scripture calls it an Enemy, and the last Enemy, 2 *Cor.* 15. and it doth the worst it can, even to Gods own people; But it may be said of it, as *Socrates* said of his Enemies, they may kill me, but they cannot hurt me. For what *Basil* said of Martyrdome, is true

ἀναιρεῖσθαι
ἐν ἀναιρέσει.
διὰ τοῦτο τὸν
τοῦ μαρτυρίου
ὄφελος.

of any kind of Death to Gods Children; it is but a way to passe from a Temporal Life to an Eternal. *She Dyed.* The Holyest and most Religious persons are subject to Death. The Apostle speaking of the *Patriarches*, these all Dyed (saith he) 11 *Heb.* 13. Grace gives comfort in Death, but not power against it. It is one of the Statutes of Heaven, which cannot be revoked. *Statutum est 9 Heb.* 27. it is appointed for all Men once to die. There is no man hath power over the Spirit to retain the Spirit, neither hath he power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that Warr, 8 *Eccl.* 8. no union unseperable, but that between Christ and a believer. Death will seperate the union between Husband and Wife, between Children and Parents, between *David* and *Jonathan*, yea the union between Soul and Body for a time; but not the union between Christ and the Soul: for when the people of God are dissolved, then they go to be with Christ, which is best of all. If it be objected, that *Enoch* and *Elias* never saw Death; the Answer is, that singular privileges neither make a Rule, nor break a Rule; these were personal privileges, and a personal Action ever dies with the person; Neither are privileges to be amplified, for then they are no privileges. Though Christ hath taken away the sting of Death that it cannot hurt us; the strength of Death that it cannot always hold us; yet hath he not as yet, altogether destroyed it: But the best men must dye, that as Sin brought in Death, so Death may again cast out Sin. Death was first inflicted as the punishment of Sin, now it is the end of it. Therefore do the holyest men dye, that their mortality may be swallowed up of life. Again, sometimes God takes away his deerest Children by Death, as he did *Josiah* from the evil to come. Lastly, that of the Apostle is considerable, speaking of the Martyrs he saith, of whom the World was not worthy. 11 *Hebr.* 38. The World is apt to deride, revile, maligne, and cast aspersions upon good men; they will not profit by their Admonitions and good Examples; therefore the World is worthy no longer of their Societie, and God takes them away; He thinks, that he hath let them live but too long, to have no kinder usage, and therefore he takes them up ὑπὲς τὸν ἀνω συγγενῶν, as *Justin Martyr* speaks, to their heavenly kindred where they shall be more made of.

Privilegia singularia regulam non faciunt, regulam non infringunt. Personalis Actio moritur cum persona, nec sunt ampliandæ privilegia.

2 *Cor.* 5. 4.

2 *Chro.* 34. 28. & 57 *Isa.* 1.

Hence we learn, that as they are Fools, who account the Godly mans life madness; so are they that think their end to

5 *Wisd.* 4.

be

be without honour. It is not the misery of good men that they die. For he is not miserable, that dyeth but once and for a moment, that death may for ever be swallowed up of life: But he is miserable, that is ever dying and yet lives in torments infinitely worse then death: Thus it is with the wicked in Hell, who passing out of this life are immediately seised on by the second death. but for the Godly, the Scripture saith, blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first Resurrection, on such the second death shall have no power, but they shall be Preists of God and of Christ. Secondly, the Godly are desirous of death; for love is an affection of Union; Now Christ is with the Saint here, there is security in that; but the Saint also would be with Christ, for in that there is full fœlicity. Lastly, though the holiest Persons die, yet God suffers not Death to put in his Sickle before they be ripe. There is no question, what age soever *Dorcas* was of, being so full of good works, She could not but be fit for Heaven. For this reason a Christian can never die out of season. *Paul* saith, that he was as one born out of season, because he had not seen Christ on Earth; but he could not die out of season, because he was sure to see Christ in Heaven.

20 *Revel.* 6. 1 *Phil* 23.

1 *Cor.* 5. 8

That *Dorcas* died, the Text tells us? but how she died, it doth not tell us, neither was it very necessary, for we may be confident, that She who lived so piously, could not but die peaceably. She that was so full of good works in her life, we may probably think, that she was not full of fears at her death. The wise man tels us, that the wicked is driven away in his wickednesse, but the righteous hath hope in his death. 14 *Prov.* 32, *Dorcas* being so righteous a woman, could not but have hope in her death, and it is very probable, She had τὴν πληροφορίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος *The full assurance of hope*, 6 *Heb.* 11. It is likely, She had that full assurance of hope, that filled her with joy; But to be sure, She had that hope in her death, which would not make her ashamed at the day of Judgement.

5 *Rom* 5.

I will only add this, now *Dorcas* is gone, her works we are sure have followed her long since; and our praises can add nothing to her glory, only they are an excitement to our selves. To him that soweth righteousnesse there shall be a sure reward, 11 *Pro.* 18. Which reward *Dorcas* now hath. For God is not unrighteous, that he should forget *Dorcas* works and labour of love, which She shewed towards his name, in that She ministred

unto

unto the Saints, 6 *Hebr.* 10. That *Dorcas* Soul is blessed I can tell you; But how blessed, if I had the tongue of Men and Angels, I could not tell you. The Scripture hath left us but a Negative description of the Saints blessedness, Eye hath not seen nor Ear heard &c. 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. *Paul* was translated out of himself to behold it, and being returned into himself, could not express it. Does not envy *Dorcas* her happiness, but imitate her holiness. She hath rested from her labours and received her Crown; but left us still to sweat and toil in Gods Vine-yard; Nor must we think to come to Heaven upon easier terms than Gods Saints have done before us; Wherefore let us gird up the loyns of our minds, let us every day be adding more Oil to our Lamps, that an entrance may be ministred unto us abundantly, into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2 *Cor* 12.
14 *Rev.* 13.
2 *Pet.* 1. 13.
25 *Matth.* 4.
2 *Pet.* 1 11.

It is time now that I hasten to a conclusion. I have spoken what I intend, of *Dorcas* in the Text. Let us now μεταχηματισωμεθα Give me leave to parallel the *Dorcas* that is dead in our days, with the *Dorcas* that was sick and dyed in those days: And surely in water, face cannot answer to face more adæquately, than her conversation that is now dead, did answer to *Dorcas* whilst she was alive. But before I fall on this, I beg leave to enter two Pleas in this Holy Court: The one on the behalf of others, the other on the behalf of my self. First, I profess, that I was not desired, either directly or obliquely by the Person deceased or any of her Relations, or other to speak any thing of her, Alas, it needed not; for though dead, she yet speaketh; and her own good works, whereof she was full, were sufficient to praise her in the Gates. The second Plea I enter on the behalf of my self and that is this, if I had been desired yet I should not have said any thing of her, had I not known her my self and took it for granted that many others knew her to be a person exemplary for Piety, and so worthy to be commended as a pattern for our imitation. Therefore what I do in an extraordinary case, I do not intend to bring into an ordinary use, or encourage others to do it. And now having put in these two Pleas, I fall to my self to the work. I know, I have matter enough, if not more than I can Methodically dispose. But I remember the counsel of the Proverb; Put not thy Cattel into a pasture, where there is no hedg. Therefore I will bound my self within the limits of the Text.

27 *Pro.* 9.
11 *Hebr.* 4.
31 *Prov.* 31.

Ne immittas pecus tuum in pratum, ubi non est sepes.

First then, it is said of *Dorcas* that she was a Disciple; so was the

the Gentlewoman deceaſed, and as it is ſaid of *Maaſon*, not only a Diſciple, but an old Diſciple, 21 *Act.* 16. and her Age rendred her Diſciple-ſhip the more Honourable; for the hoary Head is a Crown of Glory, if it be found in the way of righteouſneſſe, 16 *Prov.* 31. hoarineſs is then honourable, when it doth ſuch things, as becomes ſuch an Age. So did ſhe behave her ſelf, as *Paul* bids *Titus* direct the Aged Woman, 2 *Tit.* 3. She was in behaviour as becommeth Holineſs, and a teacher of good things. Her converſation was a dayly Sermon to the young women about her; Now when I ſay, that ſhe was a Diſciple, my meaning is (as in the entrance I explained it) firſt that ſhe was a profeſſour of the Goſpel, and this ſhe was not aſhamed of, but accounted her glory, and therefore would not diſſemble her profeſſion in any place, or amongſt any company. She was not like thoſe effœminate women, *Tertullian* ſpeaks of, who were *pudoris magis ne mores quàm ſalutis*; And though ſhe did not (as ſhe did not expect to) eſcape the ſcoffings and reproaches of wicked perſons, yet being conſcious to her ſelf of nothing, whereof they might accuſe her, having the witneſs of a good Conſcience, ſhe accounted her accuſations, her glory; and thought that they did but (according to the Attick phraſe) waſh her fairer with ſuch aſperſions. I have often obſerved it in her, how ſhe deſpiſed the ſhame, which attended the profeſſion of the Goſpel.

Canities tunc venerabilis eſt, quando ea gerit, quæ canitiem decent, Chryſ.

ἐγκλήματα ἔγκαυμα.

πλάνην τῶν ὀρθῶν.

2.

She was a Diſciple, that is, a Learner; one that had her dependance upon the ordinary means of inſtruction. She was not like thoſe, that having got a little knowledg by the Miniſtery, come to be puffed up, and afterwards contemn it; herein dealing with us, as Mules do with their Dams, having ſucked our Milk, they kick us with their heels. She was farr from the fancie of perfection, either in knowledge or grace; and therefore was ſhe ſenſible of the neceſſity of the means. She was converted by the Miniſtery of the word, and ſo ſhe deſired the ſincere Milk of it, to grow thereby, having once taſted how gracious the Lord is. The Miniſtery ſhe allwayes looked on as a Divine calling, and the ordinance of preaching as the means, whereby God would gather in and build up the Saints till the comming of Chriſt; and though ſhe had attained to a great meaſure both of underſtanding and holineſs more than ordinary, and had her abode in a place, where ſhe enjoyed the beſt helps to increaſe them, yet ſhe deſpiſed not the weakeſt means. Two

1 *Pet.* 2. 2, 3.

4 *Eph.* 11, 12, 13.

Two things there were indeed, which she disliked; that men should take upon them the Ministery as a calling, who had not
5 Heb. 4. a lawful calling to it. The other was, that very young experienced men should take upon them this weighty Office: She thought them like young Children, that would be feeding and serving themselvs, before they knew with what hand to do it, or were able to distinguish between the right hand and the left; So do they take on them, to feed not only themselves, but others,
5 Heb. 14. not only with Milk, but strong Meat, before they have their Sences exercised to put a difference between the right hand and the left, between Truth and Errour. She was sensible, what advantage such Preachers give to Papists and Sectaries: and therefore it was a desire of the credit of the Ministery, together with the successe of it, that made her wholly to dislike the one, and in a great measure to dislike the other.

2. *Dorcas* was full of good works, so was this our *Dorcas*. Good works are two-fold, either *inhærent* wrought in us, or *transient* wrought by us. She was full of both; First, of good works inhærent wrought in her, that is, of the graces of the Spirit. Like the Kings Daughter, all glorious within. And
45 Psal. 13. her adorning was chiefly of the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible; for after this manner in the old
1 Pet. 3. 4, 5. time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves. She accounted Gods Image her greatest brightnes and glory: grace was her Jewel, and her Soul was a Cabinet full of such Jewels. The first means of her conversion unto grace (I have heard her sometimes say) was the ministery of
3 Rom. 23. one Mr. *Rhodes*, a painful Preacher, who at that time lived in or not farr distant from *Hull*. Before that time, she would say, she was very vain, ignorant and inconsiderate: and yet, it may be, her vanity then was as good, as that which passeth for great grace among many now. I mean strict civility: but being once spiritually illuminated, with *Paul*, she accounted that which the World esteems precious, to be but drosse and dung in compa-
3 Phil. 7, 8. rison of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ her Lord. More particularly.

She was full of the Grace of Faith; and therefore notably
Pabulum fidei. well acquainted with the promises, which are the food of Faith:
Organum fidei. A diligent attender on the word, the instrument of Faith: An
10 Rom. 17. earnest desirer, and a most conscientious frequenter of the Lords
Nutrimentum fidei. Supper, the means to increase it: and by reading the promi-

ses,

ſes, hearing the Word, receiving the Sacrament, joyned with a ſpecial Act of application in them all, ſhe had attained to a kind of Plerophorie, a full aſſurance of Faith. When ſhe was now Sick, ſhe told me that ſince her converſion, ſhe had at ſeveral times many doubts and fears ariſing in her Heart, *Satan* deſired to Winnow her as Wheat, but (ſaid ſhe) my Faith failed not. God did enable her ſtill to hold faſt her integrity, and *Satans* ſhaking her with his temptations, did but help to eſtabliſh her the more afterwards, and well indeed might ſhe hold faſt the integrity of her Faith, who continued to hold faſt the integrity of her Obedience, walking as *Elizabeth* in all the Commandements and Ordinances of the Lord blameleſs, making ſuch Conſcience of the diſcharge both of her perſonal and relative duties, that ſo farr as I have obſerved or been acquainted, though many Daughters have done vertuouſly, yet ſhe excelled them all. The ſtrength of Faith is beſt judged of, when brought to the Tryal. And I ſhall never forget her deportment under the ſad death of her moſt dear Husband. When I took upon me the boldneſſe to ask her in private (her Daughter being then only preſent) whether ſhe did under this affliction doubt of Gods Fatherly love, or whether the guilt of any Sin, but thoſe which are called Sins of dayly incurſion, preſſing her Conſcience did render the affliction more bitter? her anſwer was, ſhe did not doubt, ſhe was aſſured of Gods love: She looked on God at that time as an angry Father, but ſhe had ever found him, and then knew him to be a loving Father. And for the guilt of any Sin preſſing her Conſcience, ſhe acknowledged that her infirmities were many, and though her deſire was to fear Gods name, and to direct her wayes according to his Statutes; Yet ſhe was defective in many things: and fell ſhort of her duty (that was her grief) of her deſire likewiſe (that was her comfort) but ſhe profeſſed that her Conſcience did not accuſe her of any wicked or willful diſobedience, ſhe hated every falſe way, and had reſpect unto all Gods Commandements at all times: only ſhe feared that in this affliction God might remember former iniquities long ſince committed, which, it may be, ſhe had not throughly humbled her ſelf for. I asked her then, why ſhe was ſo ſorrowful? the ſubſtance of her reply was, that ſhe thought a more than ordinary meaſure of ſorrow was in ſuch caſes lawful, being warranted out of the Scripture by the examples of good men; and alſo convenient

10 *Heb.* 22.

22 *Luk* 31.32.
2 *Iob.* 3.

1 *Luke.* 6.

31 *Prov.* 29.

Mrs. Stillingſton.

Quotidianæ incurſionis. Teſt.

1 *Nehem.* 11.
119 *Pſal.* 5.

119 *Pſal.* 104.
119 *Pſal.* 6.

79 *Pſal.* 8.

to expreſs the ſenſe of Gods hand upon her; but yet ſhe deſired (ſhe ſaid) and would endeavour ſo to reſtrain her grief, that it might neither offend others, nor diſhonour God.

Being thus full of the grace of faith, ſhe could not but be full of love, ſeeing faith where it is, works by love. A great lover ſhe was of the ordinances, a lover likewiſe of Gods people: her delight was in the Saints of the earth, in her eyes a vile perſon was contemned, but ſhe honoured them that fear the Lord: where ſhe ſaw any thing of Chriſt, ſhe loved the perſon, as *Ambroſe* loved Chriſt dwelling in *Auguſtine*. I think one of the greateſt arguments of a mans love to Chriſt, is, when it puts him upon endeavours to gain others to the love of him: and in this very thing ſhe ſpent moſt of her time (wherein through Gods bleſſing) ſhe laboured with ſuch ſucceſſe, that beſide her natural daughters, I doubt not but ſhe hath many other daughters in the faith, who may ariſe up and call her bleſſed: ſuch whom ſhe was a ſpecial inſtrument either to beget unto Chriſt, or afterwards to build up in their holy faith.

5 Galat. 6.
16 Pſal. 3.
15 Pſal. 4.
Chriſtum hoſpitantem in Auguſtino.
2 Tim. 1. 2.
31 Prov. 28.

She was full of the ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication; in which duty ſhe was very frequent according to the injunction of ſcripture: and though ſhe was not an Euchite, ſo as to neglect all other duties of her calling, yet ſhe remembred that all things are ſanctifyed by prayer, and therefore would never omit it. *Nazienzen* would have men ſo much in this duty, that they might be able to ſhew the wounds of the knees, and there is a figure in the Heavens which Aſtronomers call, in the knees. Sure I am, this Gentlewoman, if any, might have ſhewed the wounds of the knees; for ſet aſide her private and family devotions, I have ſeen her my ſelf once, twice, & more than the third time in private meetings uſe this geſture for four or five houres together: and though age and her infirmities might have tolerated her another poſture, yet I have obſerved to my admiration, that for ſo long time ſhe hath ſeldome changed her geſture, when others more young and ſtrong have made uſe of their liberty to ſit or ſtand. It is not enough that we be frequent in prayer, unleſſe fervent; no more did this ſervant of God think it. The Orator ſaid once of the *Athenians* (comparing them to men running up an hill) they breath much, but have little ſtrength; ſo many men in prayer breath much, but have little ſtrength: whereas *Baſil* would have us with an holy impudence, to make God aſhamed, that he cannot look us in the face, if he deny our im-

1 Zach. 10.
4 Coloſ. 2.
1 Theſſ. 5. 17.
1 Tim. 4. 5.
γονάτων στιγμὰς ἐν γόνασι.
12 Rom. 12.
μεγα μεν πνεῦσαι, μικρὸν δὲ ἰσχύσαι.
32 Gen. 26.
ἀναιδείᾳ ἁγίᾳ.

importunity. Such a powerfull faculty had this Gentlewoman in prayer, as I have heard those that lived with her acknowledge and admire. One thing of her practise in this duty, I may not omit; and that is, she used to go to prayer with her children alwayes about five of the clock in the afternoon, and then examined them: and because she was sensible, how much the welfare of the Church depends upon Gods guidance of the Governours thereof, therefore in her devotions she never forgot to pray for the King, and taught her Children, while they were yet young, to do so. 1 *Tim.* 2. 2

She was full of humility, which is the grace of all other graces. She would often say, that she was the chiefest of Sinners. 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. Her Eyes were ever full of her own wants; none (she would say) enjoy'd such means and mercies, and none had profited lesse by, or walked more unworthy of them. She was still jealous of her self, and suspected that which others were ready to applaud. 9 *Ez.* 13. 32 *Gen.* 10. She thought the greatest Evils were below her Sins, and the least favours above her deservings; The more we receive said she, the more we are in debt, and therefore should be more humble, for will any man be proud of his debts? She was observed never to speak of Pride, but with Vehemency of detestation; for she would often mention a saying of Mr. *Strong*, that we are neither able to work grace, nor act grace, nor keep it in being, without a fresh supply from God, and therefore what had we to be proud of? She remembred that of the Apostle, in lowlyness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves: and therefore was apt to admire that in another, whilst the same or better in her self, she thought unworthy to be mentioned. She was ever ready in honour to preferre others before her self and therefore would often give that respect to some, as superiours, which by others were judged to be her inferiours: and though some judge this meanness of Spirit, yet they are blades of the best metall and making, which will bend most. To her inferiours she was exceeding condiscending; and when she thought that she had in anger spoken inadvisedly, she would afterwards as freely acknowledge it to them. In her apparel she would observe a grave decency: Her ordinary saying was, that she would not be first in a fashion, neither would she be singular: Yet some about her observ'd, that she never did wear a Silk Gown (though lying beside her) since these troublesome times; till they were hoped to draw nigh some Settlement. She was ever ambitious 2 *Phil.* 3. 12 *Rom.* 10.

in

in studying to avoid any appearance of vain glory: For this reason it was (as I conjecture) that when any of her Childrens Servants happened to be at her House in her Husbands absence, she was not willing that they should be present, when she went to prayer with her own Servants. Thus when she sent out her Almes (I perceive since her Funeral) she would make choice for a Messenger, one that was least known in the City, that it might be lesse suspected from whom they came; and allwayes gave the Messengers this charge, that they should not reveal who sent the Almes, but only to say that a Friend sent them. For this reason, when she had set a part a day on purpose for private Prayer and Fasting in her Chamber alone, if any Friend or Stranger came to visit her, She bad those that knew or guessed how she was employed, not to say that she was busie; but to come and tell her; and she would come down and give entertainment to those that visited her, and afterwards return to her Devotion. And this she did (as I think) lest it should be suspected, that she was so well imployed. Her Humility appeared at her Death; in that she willed (for the avoiding of ostentation, as much as cost) to be buried in this obscure place; when her Son offered, that he would of his proper charges, take care to have her Body removed to *York*, and there with Funeral Solemnity, interred in the Cathedral-Church by her Husband, who were lovely and pleasant in their lives, & therefore their ingenuous Heir would not have had them at their deaths divided. She shewed her Humility likewise in making choice of me by her Will to Preach at her Funeral, one indeed not able or worthy to commend a woman of such virtues; and whom she thought knew but little of her, and therefore could not say much. This her avoiding of vain glory shewed her to be like the Silkworm, which hides it self within the curious Silk it works, therefore we may upon her inscribe the same Motto, that is usually given to the Silk-worm, *operitur dum operatur*, she is all covered, whilst she works. Let not any wonder, that a person so Holy should be so Humble; For seeing the Scripture saith, that God gives grace to the Humble, it is no marvel, that gracious persons are most Humble, and Humble persons the most full of grace.

a *Sam.* 1, 2, 3.

1 *Pet.* 5. 8.

I cannot insist on every particular. I passe from her *inhærent* good works wrought in her, to her *transient* good works wrought by her. I will not presume so farr, as into her Closet: but her House was an House of Prayer, wherein the Morning & the Evening

ning sacrifice were daily offered up to God, consisting of two set services alwayes, prayer, and reading the word; and as occasion would give leave, of a third, *viz.* singing a Psalme: to these were added Catechizing. It is said of *Abraham*, that he had three hundred trained servants, (or as the Original will bear it) catechized servants, 14 *Gen.* 14. she had (though not such a number) yet those she had, were catechized servants. One thing I have observed, that when she had any strangers lodged in her house, she took care that they had a Bible laid in their chamber; that so they might have provision for their soules, as well as their bodies: her care was commendable in making such provision, if they were so careless as not to make use of it, that was none of her fault.

She was a strict observer of the Lords day, and saw that her son and her daughter, her man-servant and her maid-servant observed it likewise. On this day she would not lye till the ringing of the bell called her up; but, if want of health hindred not, rose the sooner, that she might set her heart and house in order, so as that her self and family might attend upon God with the lesse distraction. Her ordinary saying was, if our dear Saviour rose so early in the morning for the work of our redemption, shall we think much to rise early for his service? this I took notice of and have heard her say, that she observed the Lords-day always as a day of solemn thanksgiving; and her servants (though plentifully fed at all times) were sure to have a messe more than ordinary that day, yet not till night, because she would not detain any of them from a better feast of the ordinances.

20 *Exod.* 10.

1 *Cor.* 7. 35.

28 *Matth.* 2.

25 *Isa.* 6.

She was a most humble and constant attender upon the preaching of the word. She never went to Church, either Lords-day or other day, but first begged of God a blessing upon what she should hear. For the help of her memory, she took notes her self, and caused them under her to do the like; and at evening for the advantage of her family, she used repetition: besides she spent three houres every Munday in revising of, and ruminating upon her own notes. She hath gone many times three miles on foot in an afternoon to sermon, not out of novelty, but necessity: for being forced from *York* in the beginning of these times, she lived in *Holderness*, where the Minister preached but once a day: she was his auditour so often as he preach'd, yet could not satisfie her self with hearing but once, as he did in preaching once; and therefore (though it was winter) she would

have

have gone so far, often even on foot (I suppose for the encouragement of her servants) to sermon. I have heard her frequently admire Gods great goodnesse to this sinfull Nation, in vouchsafing unto it such abundant provision both for life and Godlinesse; for (said she) brown bread with the Gospel is good fare: and I am verily perswaded, she could have lived on the courset bread, so she might but have had the water of life with it: but however, she could have been content to have lived with the Gospel, yet she ever desired that they who labour in the word and doctrine might fare well. To this purpose she would have opened her hand wide; though a minister had a competency of temporal estate, yet she would say, that was nothing to them that lived under his ministry; as he laboured among them, so the Labourer was worthy of his hire, not only what might be necessary for subsistence, but something for encouragement.

2 Pet. 1. 3.

1 Tim. 5. 18.

She was a woman, that would not suffer sin to lye upon those that were her charge, for want of seasonable reproof: yet she alwayes tempered her reproofs with the spirit of meeknesse, was wise to observe the fittest time and place, together with the disposition of the person, and having done this, committed the successe to God by prayer. If she saw that she did not reclaim one by her admonitions, as she desired, she would conclude her reproof and advice with that pathetical expression, well, if you will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride: and her sincerity appeared in this, that she was as willing others should admonish her, and would desire them to do it: she would say to her daughters and others under her, it may be, you are afraid to anger me, but I pray, if you see any thing amisse in me, tell me of it.

19 Levit. 17.

6 Gal. 1.

Jer. 13. 17.

She was one of a very peaceable and courteous conversation: dissention she hated, and was grieved very much when any fell out in her family: if that her self had taken an offence at any person in her house (though most justly) yet she could not have been satisfied, till reconciled to them; yea, she would have condescended to have sought peace of her inferiour, although she had been the party that had received the injurie. She was sometimes troubled at the strangeness of friends, but then she remembred a saying of Mr. *Aiscough*, and would say, oh that I could do as he prescribed! the saying was this; it may be thou art troubled for Gods peoples not loving of thee, but do thou labour to love them, and thou shalt never answer for their not loving of thee.

She

She was very frequent in meditation; when she had been conferring with others, then she used to go aside, to commune with her own heart and discourse with her self: And though she was alone, yet she was not alone, for the Father was with her. 4 *Psal.* 4.

She often would mention a Speech of Mr. *Birchalls* with tears; Ah Soul, if thou hadst meditated on God more, thou hadst loved him more. 16 *Iob.* 32.

She was a woman, whose Speech was seasoned with salt, ever ministring some good to the hearers. Her Tongue was as choice silver, and her Lips did feed many. I have observed, how ready she would be upon all occasions, to administer matter of gracious discourse. I have condemned my self and others of mine own calling for our sluggishnesse. I considered, that out of the abundance of the Heart, the Mouth speaketh, and concluded that she had a greater Treasure of good things in her, than we had. At Meat-times she would especially move such conference, the better to season the meat. She thought (according to the Greek saying) *A plentiful Table to feed the Body, without good discourse to feed the Mind, is little better than a Manger.* 4 *Coloss.* 6. 5 *Eph.* 29. 10 *Prov.* 20, 21. 12 *Mat.* 34. Δεῖπνον ἄνευ λόγου, οὐδὲν διαφέρει φάτνης.

She was a woman of a sound mind, holding fast the form of sound words, and not tossed about with every wind of Doctrine. indeed she was so established with grace (the best preservative against Errours) and with *Timothy* so assured of the things that she had learn'd, knowing of whom she had learned them, that she was not easily removed. This may serve as a tast to shew, how full she was of good works. I proceed. 2 *Tim.* 1. 7. 13. 4 *Eph.* 14. 13 *Heb.* 9. 2 *Tim.* 3. 14.

Dorcas was full of Alms-deeds which she did, so was our *Dorcas*. How full I know not, for I believe she did not let her left hand know, what her right hand did. But I read in the Gospel, how Christ when he had cured an infirm Man, charged him that he should not publish it, but the more he was charged to conceal it, the more did he divulge it: So I suppose, though she charged those, to whom she gave Almes, that they should not divulge it, yet they could not be kept secret. I have heard, that her House was a little Hospital, not so much because the poor came thither for relief, but beause relief went from thence for the poor: So that what *Hierom* said of *Pammachius*, that he was *munerarius pauperum et egentium candidatus*; The like may be said of her, she was the candidate of the Poor, as ambitious of their Prayers, as others are of their praises, accounting when she had given an Almes, to have received rather 6 *Mat.* 3. 7 *Mark* 36.

than done a good turn. Whilst her Husband was alive, the poor had both Food and Physick. And whatever he gave himself (as his disposition was well enough known) I do believe, and not upon slender grounds, that she kept a Stock of her own, with her Husbands approbation, for the poor, and pious uses. I have given you a brief account of the life of our *Dorcas*, I come now to her Sickness and Death, which because they were but short, therefore I will not be long about them.

She was Sick and Dyed. I told you, there is a providence of God to be observed in the Sickness and Death of his Saints, and so there was a remarkeable providence in the Sickness and Death of this Saint, so well known and observed, that I forbear to mention it.

And it came to passe in those days; So it is come to passe in these days, these calamitous and distracted days, wherein the Church stood in great need of her Prayers, that she was Sick and is Dead. The times are bad already, we have cause to fear, because of her death, and others like her, that they will be worse. When such Stars fall, it is a sign of storms about to arise. The Lord in mercy prevent them.

cùm stellæ cadunt, venti sequentur. Arist.

She was Sick and Dyed. Sickness is the summons to Death, & the time of Sickness is that, which God in mercy vouchsafeth to his Children to fit them for Death. Her Sickness was but short, therefore you may say, her time of preparation was not long. There was no such need of it, her whole life had been a preparation for Death, and now she had little else to do, but to render her Soul into Gods hands. Her Disease was judged to be a Plurisie, it began with a pain in her side, and so increased, It brings to my mind, that which I read of *Peter*, 12 *Act.* how the Angel smote him on his side, saying, arise up quickly, and his Chains fell off from his hands: So did the Lord smite her on her side, and her Chains of Sin and Sickness, and Mortality, quickly fell off from her; And now her Soul being unpinioned, is mounted up above the Clouds till the day that she shall come with Christ in the Clouds to Judgement. In her Sickness I apprehended her very patient, yet she desired me that I would beg of God for her a greater measure of patience, for though the Spirit was willing, yet the flesh (she said) was weak.

26 *Mat.* 41.

She was Sick and Dyed. So our *Dorcas* not inferiour to her in the Text, though so holy a woman, yet could not be exempted from paying her last debt to nature. Some, it may be, will

be

be inquisitive to know, how she Dyed? I answer, first, though she Dyed soon, yet not suddenly I perceive, she hath for a long time Dyed dayly in her expectation, and hath frequently told her Friends, that she might not stay long with them. There are many events and second causes, that help to hasten Death, and beside the infirmities of her Bodie, I believe the late losse of her most dear Husband, might be a means to shorten her dayes. Secondly, She Dyed most comfortably. Being asked of one about her, the Morning before she Dyed, how she did; She said, she was all peace, peace within and peace without. About two days before she Dyed, when I asked her, how it was with her; Her answer was; Sir I am very ill, I have a great pain in my side, and spit blood: But I thank God, I have passed the great Gulfe, for I am assured, and she went over with it again (speaking more heartily than at other times) Ey, I am assured that God hath pardoned all my sins: and then she fell into an admiration of Gods mercy to her; but (said she) how unworthily have I walked off, and unsutably to such great love! and at the uttering of these words, I know not, whether she did refrain her self from weeping. When I farther asked her, whether she did not believe, that God had pardoned this Sin to her, as well as the rest? She answered, she doubted it not, yet it could not but trouble her to think of it. Thus she continued to her Death, for any thing I heard to the contrary. She knew (she said) her State was safe; but she desired, if God saw good, that he would rebuke *Satan*, that it might be comfortable, so long as she lived: To this purpose we prayed with her several times, and it pleased God to grant her request.

So I have given you the Parallel between *Dorcas* and this worthy Gentlewoman deceased. I am sure, I have not represented things to you in such lively colours, as they deserved; but I have not set a false Glosse upon any thing. What remains, but as I have done this to excite you to follow her steps, so that I exhort you in the words of the Apostle, *6 Heb.* 11, 12. I desire, that every one of you would shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope, to the end; that you be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

FINIS